

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Sara Lee Bakery Co

Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center

MMTC's Northwest Michigan's Active Learning Model® for Training Cooks Up Positive Impacts for Sara Lee Bakery Group

Client Profile:

Sara Lee Bakery Group, which operates bakery businesses in the United States, Europe and Australia, is a division of Sara Lee Corporation. Headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, Sara Lee Corporation has operations in 55 countries and markets branded products in nearly 200 nations. The corporation employs 145,800 people worldwide. Sara Lee Bakery Group competes in the fresh, refrigerated and frozen bakery segments. The Traverse City, Michigan, facility employs 450 people.

Situation:

The Sara Lee Bakery Group connected with the Michigan Technical Education Center (MTEC) at Northwestern Michigan College (NMC), the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center's (MMTCs), a NIST MEP network affiliate, Northwest (NW) Regional Office, to ask about employee training. This initial contact resulted in the development of a Corporate University Training program model designed specifically for Sara Lee, utilizing the Northwest MMTC's Active Learning Model® (ALM) for training. Company representatives have worked closely with Darrell Rogers and Linda Racine of the MMTC NW office to develop and implement this training model. Since 2001, MMTC and the local chapter of Sara Lee have worked together on executive and management coaching, one-on-one training where applicable, process support training for key personnel and, most recently, conducted several Train the Trainer seminars so that members of Sara Lee's management team are certified and approved to conduct future training sessions for employees using the ALM unique to the NW office. This allows Sara Lee to continue training initiatives on their own schedule, without having to rely on NW staff availability. This self-sufficiency helps Sara Lee utilize and capitalize on their positive momentum to implement internal performance improvements. Internal Sara Lee personnel will conduct 50 percent of the planned training for 2005.

Solution:

MMTC-NW's ALM incorporates Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Evaluation in regard to training. At the end of most training sessions, evaluations are about the trainers performance and the value of the course materials; i.e., did the trainer do a good job, and did participants like the training. This can be valuable feedback for the trainer, but is of little use to the employer who has just spent valuable company resources to attend a training course. This type of training is usually isolated events. Companies cannot afford to send every employee to the same training, nor is all training right for every employee. Companies wanting to create training plans across their organization would benefit greatly from this model.

The first step in the ALM is to meet with management to set the overall training purpose and specific learning objectives. It then goes the extra mile to make sure that all attendees demonstrate the new skill or knowledge before leaving the training session. The process is further designed to trace the impact back through the organization and into the workplace to evaluate how the skill or knowledge

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was transferred to the workplace, on the job. Clients working with NW using this process, including Sara Lee, are very pleased with the results. A local Sara Lee representative indicated that the training continues to be very valuable, particularly from a morale standpoint. Key employees receive skills and tools that enhance their job performance, equipping them with the necessary skills for advancement.

Results:

- * Created Corporate University Training Program.
- * Trained internal champions to continue the process.
- * Company personnel will conduct 50 percent of their own training for 2005.
- * Increased employee morale.

Testimonial:

"Key employees receive skills and tools that enhance their job performance, equipping them with the necessary skills for advancement. It's a win-win for everyone and we're very satisfied with our progress."

Tony Gerstberger, HR Director